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Landing Craft Convoy Moving Into East China Waters

On 3 December 1955 a Chinese Communist naval convoy, including 20 LCM (landing barges), 1 ARL (landing craft repair vessel), 2 LSM (medium landing ship---700 ton displacement) and a frigate were sighted, proceeding southward along the coast in the Yellow Sea north of Shanghai. 1/ It is probable that the landing barges were built in Port Arthur since an earlier report has indicated that the Chinese were constructing 45-foot steel-hulled landing barges (LCM-type) at the former Sino-Soviet Shipbuilding Company located there. In mid-May some 70 barges were reportedly sighted in the harbor, and others were under construction. 2/

While it is probable that the convoy of landing craft was enroute to Shanghai, it is also possible that it will be further deployed into the East China/Taiwan Strait area. Thus far no concentration of military landing craft has been noted in the strait area, although a few barges, engaged in coastal supply activity, are occasionally sighted.

Also of interest in connection with the movement of landing craft was the recent interview of Chinese Communist Deputy Premier Chen I, published in the 24 November issue of Junge Welt, an East German publication. In the course of this interview, Chen I reiterated the Communist intention to "liberate" Taiwan, by force of arms if necessary. Among the preparations toward this end, he cited the rapid construction of the trans-Fukien railroad, the construction of the coastal airfields and the "building of a number of ships to sail to Taiwan".

Sources:

- 1/ Naval Message No. 2911, 031210Z, 4 Dec 1955, Confidential
- 2/ 1 Nov 55, Secret/NoFORN.
- 3/ FBIS, Daily Report (Far East) 29 Nov 55, p. AAA-25, Official Use Only.

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